

has done his best to try to direct our attention to Haiti's dire needs, I'm particularly pleased that George Brunstad chose to turn his moment of personal triumph into one that will help better the lives of some of the residents of an impoverished nation only a few hundred miles from our shores.

This coming weekend, the Wilton Baptist Church and the Center of Hope will be holding a special celebration in George's honor. I send George, Judy, their family, and all those who will be attending the celebration my best wishes, and my enthusiastic congratulations.

#### FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate has agreed by unanimous consent to pass a substitute amendment to the Federal Trade Commission Reauthorization Act, S. 1234. The bill would reauthorize the Federal Trade Commission in furtherance of its mission to enhance the efficient operation of the marketplace by both eliminating acts or practices that are unfair or deceptive and preventing anti-competitive conduct. Further, the legislation would authorize funding for the FTC through 2008, and enhance the Commission's ability to combat international—or cross-border—fraud.

In addition to reauthorizing this vital consumer protection agency for the period 2005 through 2008, the bill, as amended, is also designed to mitigate the challenges that the FTC increasingly faces in combating cross-border fraud. The FTC's consumer protection responsibilities are essential, particularly in today's global climate of high-speed information and marketing, which know no international borders.

This legislation is crucial to the FTC's ability to protect American consumers by authorizing the Commission to: Share information involving cross-border fraud with foreign consumer protection agencies; secure confidential information from those foreign agencies; work in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice to seek redress for American consumers in foreign courts; make criminal referrals to the DOJ for cross-border criminal activity; and generally strengthen its relationship with foreign consumer protection agencies.

Under the FTC's current authority the agency is not able to exchange information with its foreign counterparts to shut down consumer scams originating outside the United States, but perpetrated against American consumers. As a consequence, the FTC is left without the ability to seek redress on behalf of defrauded consumers. In addition, the FTC is not currently considered a "market regulator," and thus, banking agencies may not share suspicious consumer information with the FTC. As a result, the FTC is not able to trade funds derived from illegal Internet schemes sent through U.S. banks and placed in offshore bank accounts. Thus, those who devise and

carry out such schemes are too often allowed to escape the grasp of the FTC. But even if the FTC were able to share information with its foreign counterparts and market regulators, the FTC would be unable to litigate consumer protection cases in foreign courts.

While these are descriptions of merely a few gaps in the FTC's current international consumer protection authority, they underscore how vulnerable American consumers are to cross-border fraud. This legislation would fill these and other gaps in the FTC's current international consumer protection authority, and allow the FTC to function more effectively in carrying out its Congressional mandate to protect American consumers.

This bill, as amended, would also grant authority to the FTC to provide investigative and other services to a requesting domestic law enforcement agency and receive from that agency, if offered, reimbursement for the FTC's involvement. Finally, the amendment would provide to the Commission the authority it has requested to receive gifts or items that would be useful to the Commission as long as a conflict of interest is not created by such receipt.

The underlying bill was considered and reported unanimously last year by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Since being placed on the Senate Calendar, its provisions have been thoroughly vetted on a bipartisan basis with the multiple federal agencies that have a vested interest in its enactment. We have worked with and received sign off from each affected agency on this substitute amendment.

#### REPUBLICAN HIGH TECH TASK FORCE

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the critical role of technology and innovation in maintaining our Nation's security and prosperity in the future. Technology and the intellectual property that accompanies it is the very lynchpin of our modern economy. Technology is changing all the rules, from the way we do business to how we communicate. It is saving lives, and it is protecting our homeland. In recognition of the critical role that technology plays in the lives of all Americans, Majority Leader BILL FRIST has made technology a top priority by devoting significant time and resources to the Senate Republican High Tech Task Force which serves as the focal point for technology-related issues in the United States Senate.

I have been honored to serve as the chairman of the Senate Republican High Tech Task Force during the 108th Congress. I have been privileged to meet the leading innovators of our great Nation and talk directly to the employees who have made technology their career and are delivering every day the promise of the new "next big thing."

The work of the Senate Republican High Tech Task Force increases in importance each day, as technology be-

comes ever more a part of our lives. It is the responsibility of the Task Force to be leaders on technology issues in the Senate. We are tasked by the majority leader to reach out to the technology community to listen and learn and then advise our colleagues and lead on legislation related to this important sector of our economy. And we have been very successful this year. Senate Republican High Tech Task Force members have passed important legislation that protects technology and helps foster continued innovation. Just a few of the many accomplishments in the past few months include the following: Senator ALLEN has championed intellectual property protection and has utilized his position with the Committee on Foreign Affairs to ensure that American intellectual property is protected abroad and that overseas piracy of copyrighted materials is fought to the fullest extent possible. Senator ALLEN was also successful in passing legislation out of the Senate to keep State, local, and Federal tax collectors from driving up the cost of broadband with Internet access taxes.

Senator GRASSLEY has championed free trade agreements with Singapore, Chile and Australia. Free trade is the life blood of our economy and ensuring that American companies are able to access new markets on a fair footing with all appropriate intellectual property protections creates and protects American jobs.

Senator SUNUNU has led Senate efforts in protecting nascent voice over internet protocol technology which promises to provide new data services for businesses and consumers, fundamentally changing the way we look at phone service.

Senator BURNS worked tirelessly to successfully secure passage of the CAN-SPAM Act which was passed unanimously by the United States Senate. Unsolicited commercial e-mails are overwhelming our telecommunications infrastructure and costing Americans productivity and now, more alarmingly, affecting their confidence in online transactions. The CAN-SPAM Act was a successful first step, and the Task Force will continue to work to restore confidence and protect American consumers from SPAM.

Senator SMITH and I have been successful in seeing the Invest in the USA Act passed out of the Senate. This important legislation will bring back a cash infusion of over \$400 billion to be reinvested in America and create over 600,000 American jobs. This will allow money that American companies earn overseas to be brought back to the United States where it can create jobs and grow our economy.

My colleagues and I have been very busy during the 108th Congress. We have visited technology centers around the United States and met with top innovators and the most talented employees in the world. The work of the High Tech Task Force will continue through the remainder of this session and into the 109th Congress.